GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4455
ANSWERED ON:29.03.2017
Dam on Brahmaputra
Gandhi Shri Feroze Varun

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of concerns and challenges faced/likely to be faced by the country on account of commissioning of a largest hydro-electric power project (Zangmu Hydropower Station) by China which shall impact the flow of Brahmaputra in Arunachal Pradesh;

(b) the details of the steps taken by the Government to address the issue;

(c) whether China's neighbouring countries have also complained that other dams of China are affecting flow of water in their countries and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether any regional water sharing treaties are being considered by the Government and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRI M. J. AKBAR)

(a) & (b) According to reports, Zangmu hydroelectric project has been operationalized in October, 2015. Reports indicate that it is a 510 MW run-of-the-river project. The 'Outline of the 12th Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China' indicates that three more hydropower projects on the main stream of the Brahmaputra River in Tibet Autonomous Region have been approved for implementation by the Chinese authorities.

Government, in close cooperation with various State Governments including Government of Assam, which are users of the waters of river Brahmaputra, continues to carefully monitor the water flow in river Brahmaputra for early detection of abnormality so that corrective and preventive measures are taken to safeguard livelihood of peoples of these States of Union of India.

Various issues relating to trans-border rivers, including construction of hydro-power dams, are discussed with China under the ambit of India-China Expert Level Mechanism which was established in 2006. 10th Meeting of the ELM was held in New Delhi in April 2016. Government of India, under the Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Cooperation on Trans-border Rivers, signed in October 2013, obtains hydrological data from China on Brahmaputra River. This arrangement has been useful in preventing damage during the flood season.

As a lower riparian State with considerable established user rights to the waters of the River, India has conveyed its views and concerns to the Chinese authorities, including at the highest levels of the Government of the People's Republic of China. India has urged China to ensure that the interests of downstream States are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas.

The Chinese side has conveyed to us on several occasions that they are only undertaking run-of-the-river hydropower projects which do not involve diversion of the waters of the Brahmaputra. We intend to remain engaged with China on the issue of trans-border rivers to safeguard our interest.

(c) Government has seen reports regarding discussions between China and certain countries in the South East Asia region on water supply in Mekong River, including under the framework of the Lancang-Mekong River Cooperation mechanism.

(d) Presently, Government is not discussing any regional water sharing treaties with China.